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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE UNITY OF MEN.

"Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."—HEB. xii., 22-24.

There is much, particularly in the later writings of the New Testament, which we cannot fully understand unless we go back and put ourselves, to a certain degree, in the places of those to whom the words were written. The early believers in Christ subjected themselves to almost every inconvenience, and in many instances to every persecution, which it was possible for men to meet. They were regarded as unpatriotic—as having forsaken the religion of their fathers; for with the Jews civil and religious liberty were so blended that to leave one was to leave the other. It was a thing hard to be borne (especially by a generous heart conscious of loving his country) to be supposed to be indifferent to that country, and a traitor to it. They were charged with having taken up a new and idolatrous faith. The whole history of God's dealings with his chosen people, chastising them for wandering from a belief in the true God to a belief in impostors and idols, was employed against them. They were cast out. They were, so to speak, set up as a mark. They were reviled on every hand.

That was not all. If you consider how much men depend for their stability in life upon the senses; if you reflect that while the immediate Jews were not cast out of the temple, nor forbidden the use of the Mosaic economy, they were taught that the religion of Christ was an interior and invisible religion, and that ordinances had come near to their end, and that they might be dispensed with without any breach of faith or fidelity; if you take into consideration what it was, in the midst of a community who had been educated under the influence of the most gorgeous ritual ever known, and who had been accustomed to express their thoughts and emo-

SUNDAY MORNING, May 5, 1872. LESSON: 1 COR. I. 18-31. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 364, 531.

tions by some symbol or type or physical method, to bring in a system which set at naught all symbols and types and physical methods, and substituted that which had no outward manifestation, nothing but exposition—as the apostle says, *to bring to naught that which was by that which was not*—in other words to present truths which had no visible exponent; if you ponder these things you will perceive how these men must have been embarrassed and harassed. They were bewildered. On the one side they were reproached for being unpatriotic and irreligious, and for abandoning their families and their faith; and on the other side they were told that ordinances were done with; that days had no more sanctity; and that there had been ushered in a spiritual invisible kingdom of the Saviour—a kingdom that they could not see here, but that they would see in heaven. They seemed to be entangled in a net which drew them away from the visible without giving them any clear revelation of the mere invisible which was to take its place.

The long line of old Jews was therefore summoned up. "Do you suppose," said the writer in Hebrews, "that you are disbranched from the tree, and that that to which you are called amounts to an unpatriotic abandonment of old historic grounds? You are called to a life of faith, and every one of these worthies became what he was by faith. Every one of them relied upon the exercise of that principle which we call you to exercise." The roll was called, and from the ages that had passed rose one venerable head, and another. One after another responded, till the Jewish mind fairly thrilled with ecstatic pride in its national history. Name upon name was enumerated; and it was declared, "These died in faith; and these suffered in faith; and these lived by faith; and these conquered by faith."

What is faith? It is the power to see things which have no visible nor sensuous representation. It is the power to apprehend principles instead of things material. It is the power to live in the presence of things invisible, not incarnated, and to perceive them more clearly than the things which come in at the eye-gate or the ear-gate. And all the great heroes who had gone before lived by faith.

Then, after the enumeration of these men who died by faith, comes the twelfth chapter of Hebrews. And a blessed chapter it is. That twelfth chapter of Hebrews is a mountain of consolation. That twelfth chapter of Hebrews, if it were sounded in music, would overtop Beethoven's noblest symphonies. It is one of those chapters which deals at once with things of the present and things of the future—with things relating to this

world and things relating to the kingdom of the invisible: and it stands pouring down the tide of time a song of consolation, every word of which is sweetness to the souls of those who suffer. It opens with the declaration that God is a Father, and that men must suffer, and that suffering is the evidence of God's paternity, and of their filial relations to him. It goes on, after turning the theme in various ways, to declare that in suffering they are not cast out by reason of God's anger, but that, contrariwise, by reason of their adhesion to Christ, they are called, through the very road of suffering by which he came to a glorious unity, and to a companionship most august.

And then, in order to touch the Jewish imagination as sympathetically as possible, the writer told them that they had come, not to the august things which their fathers saw, but to something transcendently nobler. The old lay level with the earth; but the new was something that was exalted into the invisible realm.

"Ye are come unto Mount Zion."

Not unto the Mount Zion which was so dear to every Jew, but unto that other Mount Zion, compared with which, as they looked upon it, this one was as a little hill. If they had stood, looking from the east upon Mount Zion, seeing it, as in a summer afternoon we often see lifted up against the sky mountain ranges, or clouds, which look like vast mountains, magnificent in altitude and innumerable in aggregation, the apostle might have told them that they had come to Mount Zion as thus typified. Mount Zion as seen from over the hill of Bethany? No; but Mount Zion above that, glorious, transfigured.

"Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels [for at this time, to the apostle's eye of faith, all the heaven was filled with angels. Round and round the whole circuit, to his eye, fire flashed from their wings], to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Ye new-born creatures; ye that are solitary and alone; ye homeless ones; ye without a country; ye cast out, behold that which has happened. See that you have come to a nobler Zion than the old Zion, and to a nobler Jerusalem than the old Jerusalem. To the city of the living, all-creating God, full of light and glory, ye are come. Ye are come, not to the temple ring, not to the synagogical clique, but to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven. Ye are come not to this teacher nor that instructor of narrow mind, but to the spirits of just men

made perfect, gathered out of every age. Ye belong to their company. And ye are come to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to his blood, to that which labors on earth and reigns in heaven. All these are yours.

The outside of their religion was ignoble enough; a very plain and a very poor thing it was to the physical eye; but to one who would shut his eyes, and view the inside, it was royal.

To be a Christian in those early days was a thing of great glory. It joined a man to that which was best in the experience of the human race. It took hues from all that had passed, and borrowed radiance from all that was to come. It went above the horizon, and took something from the Father, and something from the Son, and something from the whole heavenly host. It derived something from all that was noble and divine from the earliest to the latest period of the world. And the apostle says to men, "This is yours." What a comfort it would be to them if they could but realize it, and live consciously in such a glorious unity!

It is of this unity of men with all that is transcendent, all that is best, and all that is universal, that I shall speak this morning.

All men are united together in the world in various external ways. They are important ways; and yet they are not the most important. We are united to nationalities who speak the same tongue that we do. We are united in states, in cities, and in neighborhoods. In neighborhoods we are united by affiliations of the household. And these things we do not despise; we recognize their benefits; but we recognize that there are unities which transcend these; that are larger than they are; that have a significance which does not belong to them.

All men are united together by a common weakness. They are united by a common origin. From the dust they came, and they bear the marks of it. All are united together by their liability to temptation; by the ease with which they fall; by the power of the senses and the feebleness of faith. All are united together by a common struggle—that struggle by which they seek to subdue the flesh to the control of the spirit. Whatever may be the philosophy of sin, whatever may be the theory as to human origin, there is a struggle going on in the world among all men who seek to be good, or wise, or true, or noble, and consequently among all who are under the light of Christianity; and they are united together by this common struggle.

As men in a hospital come there from every where—from this battle-field and from that battle-field, from this camp and from that camp—to overcome disease, and break away from its entangle-

ments, and gain the freedom of health again ; so, not stopping to discuss the different philosophies of the various schools, but recognizing them all as of relative importance, there is one fact that all unite in acknowledging. It is admitted by all that everybody is seeking to rise from the low to the high ; from the weak to the strong ; from the impure to the pure. And point me to that man who has had no struggle ; point me to that man who has never reached manhood by any hard climbing or by any battles ; point me to that man who has never said to his pride, nor had occasion to say to it, " Why doest thou so ?" point me to that man who has had no combat with selfishness and appetite, and passion ; point me to that man who has had no trial nor struggle with himself ; for I have his name. I know who he is. God has baptized him, and called him *Bastard.*

" If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

The sign of royal birth is that men all start together at a low point, and that they are all together striving up toward a higher and an ideal manhood. It is this strife that is common to us all, and that unites us all. All of us are of the earth earthy ; and all of us, in varying degrees, are, through suffering, through tears, through anxieties, through struggles, and through anguish often, working our way up from a low point to a higher one. We are all in a great conflict. And as no flowers grow in our gardens unless it please God to send dews and showers upon them ; so tears make the heart rich. It is by trials that God developes men. Sufferings and sorrows are but birth-pains ; and we are born into a higher realm if we survive them. If our faith fail, and we go down under them, they destroy us ; but if we understand the organization in which we are living, if we recognize the fact that we spring from the dust, and are all seeking, not knowing what it is, our divine nature, then we are more than we seem.

Is there no call in you, the meaning of which you cannot tell ? Have you never sat on summer evenings, and heard sounds that seemed to you to come from the forest or from the mountain, or that seemed almost to drop down from the heavens, playing weirdly with your imagination ? Has it never seemed as though voices called you starward and upward ? Men have yearnings and longings and importunities which are inchoate, and which they do not understand. The Spirit is praying through us with syllables which cannot be articulated.

Men are good or bad relatively. They are all good, and they are all bad. There is something of good in the worst of them, and there

is something of bad in the best of them. Not that I would take the foundation out from under anybody's feet; but that which is more common than any other one thing is limitation, circumscription, weakness, imperfection; breaking out, as men grow in strength, into wrong, into sin, with all its attendant manifestations of fear, and remorse, and repentance, with all those elements which constitute man as a fallible, erring creature, and with all those aspirations which by the Spirit of God are breathed in upon the soul. Man, himself, an imperfect being, is joined to the great band and brotherhood of imperfect beings in human life.

Men are united, too, in the reign of care in this world. In other words, nobody comes into life with a trade in his hand, but with a hand that is set to learn a trade. Nobody comes into life with a philosophy in his head, but with a head that is set to learn philosophy. All men come into this life unskillful, not knowing the seasons, nor the soil, nor the ways and manners and methods of society. The whole world is born ignorant. The entire race come into the world as blind as a bat, stumbling over the threshold. Everybody has to learn through endeavors and mistakes. No man learns without finger-cuttings, and weariness of feet, and toil of arms. Everything has to be learned. Nobody can transmit anything except mere tendencies. Wisdom has to be acquired; it is never inherited. Shakespeare's children, if he had had any, would have had to learn what they knew in the great school of toil and care and effort and mistake. All mankind are united in learning how to get through life. The great problem of this world is how to maintain manhood while you are feeding through the mouth, through the ear, and through the eye. That which concerns us most is to know how to be a child of God while we are trying to subdue the earth, and all the methods of it.

Into this fellowship, into this school, into this great primal necessity, all men are born. There is the great unity of care and burden and toil which joins the race together. Some shoulders are broad, and carry the load easily, but other shoulders are narrow and collapse under it. Apparently, some are meant for conquerors, and some for captives, in the great struggle. But wherever, under the heavens, men aspire, everybody has the dust-mark on him. He treads the road of toil, and bears its impress.

We are not half as anxious to trace our pedigree in this direction as we are in the other. If we can trace our ancestry back to some great Earl; if we can trace our lineage back to Alfred, or along some line of illustrious men, how noble we think that! But when Mr. Darwin suggests that we should trace our pedi-

gree the other way, we are not so anxious to do it—though I think that in many respects it would be easier! Disguise it as you will, the points in which we are alike are more in the animal direction than in any other. We are of the earth, earthy. Our attributal qualities are those of earthiness. And for ages to come men will be more united by their infirmities and troubles and infelicities, than by their attainments in other directions.

Men are also united in the essential ideas of Christian manhood. We are united in those germ-ideas which belong to all races. They are undeveloped in some, fully developed in others, and largely fruitful in still others. We are united in all those constituent elements which inhere in men as discriminated from any of the lower races. We may differ as to the magnitude of our excellences, as to their order, and as to their causation; but the fruits of the Spirit, as they are revealed in men, and as they are catalogued in the Word of God, are the creed of Christendom.

It is said that you never can unite men on any one creed. I say there is a creed which by and by you cannot keep men disunited upon. It is contained in the fifth chapter of Galatians. The articles of it I will read. I may call it a creed. It is not the Apostles' Creed; nor is it the Nicene Creed; neither is it that Chinese puzzle called the Athanasian Creed. It may be called, I think, the *Creed of the Spirit.* The articles of it are *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance.* These constitute that creed. And I declare that it is what every man on the globe, in his better moods, recognizes as the ideal of his true manhood. Men do not know what they believe about the churches, for the best of all reasons, that the churches themselves, half the time, do not know what they believe. They do not know what they believe in respect to rituals. They quarrel about these, and about the whole machinery of religion. So it is until you rise to a conception of true manhood. But no man ever sees true manhood that it does not touch something in him. Everything responds to it. We go back to history and glean for those traits of which is composed. If we find meekness in a man of power, it glows as a jewel on the bosom of beauty. If we find a man who abounds in goodness, how all the world bows down to it! We go around gathering these traits, one here and another there. We dive for them as men dive for the pearl oyster. We seek for them as men seek for hidden treasures. And all the world admires them. They are traits which unite men.

I go out among men and say, "Do you believe in religion?" "No," they say, "I do not believe in religion." "Do you not be-

lieve in the inspiration of the Bible?" "No, I do not believe in the inspiration of that old book, which was juggled together, and which has come down from generation to generation, musty and dusty, to us." "Do you not believe in Sunday?" "Sunday! that priest's noose by which to catch the silly and weak? No, I do not believe in that." "Do you not believe in the divinity of Christ?" "I do not believe there was any Christ." "Do you not believe that men need a sovereign change? Do you not believe that they need to be born into the church?" "The church! I would overturn every church on earth if I could." "You believe in something, do you not? Do you not believe in love?" "Oh, yes, I believe in love." "Do you not believe in joy, when it is a pure article?" "Yes, yes, I believe in joy. That fell from the crystal spheres. Certainly, I believe in joy." "Do you not believe in tranquillity, inward and outward?" "Oh, yes, everybody believes in that." "Do you not believe in peace?" "Why yes, I believe in peace. I sigh for it. Oh, that I might have one hour of such peace as I can think of!" "Do you not believe in long-suffering? When you see a man, in great exigencies, stand up firmly for what he believes to be right, and suffer persecution and want, and never say a word, then do you not believe in it?" "Yes, I believe in that. It is magnificent, sublime. There is but one man in a thousand who could suffer in that way." "Do you not believe in gentleness?" "Oh, yes. My mother was a very angel of gentleness. She used to move like the moonlight by night, and like the sunlight by day. No clock was ever so steady in striking the hours as was she in the exhibition of gentleness. It reconciles me to the sex when I think of my mother." "Do you not believe in goodness?" "Well, yes—I should believe in it if I could see it. I believe there is mighty little of it, and that what there is is a poor importation. Oh, yes, I believe in goodness. Those bountiful hearts, those summer-souls, those great natures which are oftentimes sprawling like an apple-tree, and yet full of blossoms, as next week the apple-trees will be in all our orchards—I believe in these, as the exponents of goodness, making everybody happy where they go, and shedding fragrance, like gardens in the night, which men perceive, though they cannot see the source of it. I do believe in goodness." "Do you not believe in faith?" "Ah! now you are coming to theology. No, I do not believe in faith." "I suppose you believe there is a great realm of thought and aspiration?" "I believe that no man should live like a crawfish, or like a pig. I believe that a man ought to have elevated thoughts and lofty aspirations. I believe that a man should be as large as the universe in his conceptions." "Well, that is what we mean by faith—living

for ideas—for things ineffable—for that which appeals to something higher than the senses—to something which does not belong to the animal." "All right, then, if that is faith. Yes, I believe in that." "Do you not believe in meekness?" "What do you mean by meekness?" "Well, suppose a great nature, in the midst of traitors, should stand for his country; suppose he should stand faithful among the faithless multitude; suppose, while everybody was beating on him as the surf beats on the shore, he should stand, full of calmness, and full of soul-gentleness; suppose under such mighty provocation he should remain steadfast, immovable, but without violence or irritability, do you not think that would be glorious?" "Yes, it *would* be glorious, magnificent, beautiful, if it were possible; but it is not possible." "Do you not believe in self-restraint?" "Of course I do. Every man should have self-restraint. A man without self-restraint is like a barrel without hoops, that tumbles to pieces." "Ah! then, you believe in all these things: you believe in love, in joy, in peace, in long-suffering, in gentleness, in faith, in meekness, in temperance."

Now, men and brethren, these are the fruits of the Spirit. These are embodied in the ideal work of God in this world. That work is to create in the hearts of men just these fruits; and I call this enumeration of them *the Creed of Christianity*. I believe the time will come when we shall see this creed, not alone in books, but in men and women, and in multitudes of them. I believe the time will come when it will be so believed and practiced that there will not be an infidel left. Let me take a Christian who *is* one, and who is fruitful in these qualities, and I will quench every spark of infidelity that there is in the world. Let me show Christianity, not in ideas but in living men, and in companies of them, and it will be triumphant wherever it is seen.

Is there anything that Protestants repudiate so much as Roman Catholics? Is there anything that they have a more salutary horror of than these same Roman Catholics? And yet, when the war is raging, and there is pestilence in the camp, and men are sick and dying in the hospitals, let those meek-eyed Sisters of Mercy go there and minister to the wants of Protestant boys, being tender and gentle with them, never seeking to breathe any ideas into their minds that their mothers would not, night and day walking in and out full of disinterestedness and delicacy, and diffusing about them an influence of cheer and hope; and let those noble boys go home; and let any man dare to speak a word against these kind creatures, and they will turn with clenched hand, and say, "I will beat you to the dust if you speak against them, just as quick as I would if you spoke against my mother or my sister!"

What has overcome their prejudice against the Catholics? Is it the edict of the Pope? Is it the arguments of the priests? Is it the influence of the adherents of that church? Is it any charm of its service? No, it is the pure lives of some of its members. Those are arguments which no man wants to refute. If there were more such lives there would be less atheism.

Do you suppose that men would conspire to kick out of the heavens the sun, which is the source of their harvests, and all that is beautiful, and everything that makes life desirable? Men want the sun. And do you suppose that if God were pictured to men as transcendent in beauty, as glorious in holiness, and as in sympathy with men, they would want to be atheists? They would call out for him. They would watch for him as in the night men watch for the morning. But if God is held up as a crystal, cut on the edges, I do not wonder that men are atheistic, pantheistic and infidel. And if you take Christianity according to your sect, or church, or creed, and offer it to men, I do not wonder that they feel that they are fed with sand or bran. But if you bring the fruit of the Spirit to men they will not reject it; they will accept it with gladness.

That church which has the power of generating the most of the spirit of Christ, in feeling and in conduct, will triumph in the end. For Christ shall triumph through the goodness which he implants in the bosoms of his disciples.

How sad are the battles which we are fighting! I suppose we have a great many Arminians here this morning. Ah! you do not know what a temptation I feel to give a shot at Arminianism!

There are a great many Episcopalians here. How I should like to give a slap at the Bishops! There are a great many Unitarians here. What a capital chance this would be to bring my artillery to bear on their theology! There are a great many Universalists here. How I should like to hold their ideas of the goodness of God up to ridicule and contempt!

At a horticultural show, there is a table running through a long hall for the exhibition of fruit; and this table is divided up into about twenty-five compartments which are assigned to as many exhibitors for the display of their productions. I go along the table and discuss the merits of the various articles. Here is a man who has pears, and apples, and peaches, and cherries, and plums. They are not very good; they are fair; they are about as good as the average of the fruit on the table; but they do not beat anybody else's. I see fruit that is just as good all the way down the table. But the man to whom it belongs says, "Mine ought to take the

premium." "Why?" I say. "Because it was raised on ground whose title goes back to the flood. No man has a right to claim the premium unless he can show that the title of his land goes clear down to the flood. I can prove that my title is clear, and I insist upon it that I ought to have the premium. That other fruit may have some ground for pretense, but it is uncovenanted."

I go to the next compartment, and I say to the man there, "Your fruit looks fair. It is about on an average with the rest." "On an average with the rest! There is nothing like it on the table." "Why so?" "Because it was raised under glass. Those other fellows raised theirs in the open air. This is church-fruit. It was all raised in definite enclosures, according to prescriptions which have come down from generation to generation. In judging of my fruit, you must take into consideration that it was raised according to the ordinances. It is pattern-fruit." He insists that his fruit is better than any of the rest on account of the way in which he raised it.

I go to the next compartment. There I see some magnificent fruit, and I say to the man, "Where did you raise this fruit?" He says, "It came from the highway near my house." "From the highway?" "Yes. It grew on a wilding that I found growing there. I cleared away the brush that was choking it, and trimmed it a little, and it produced this fruit." "Well," I say, "I think that is the best fruit on the table." From the whole length of the table, on both sides, there arises the exclamation, "What! are you going to give that man the premium, who has no title for his land, no greenhouse, and nothing but the highway to raise his fruit in? What sort of encouragement is that to regular fruit-growers?" The whole commotion is stopped by the man who has the awarding of the premium, saying, "The order of this show is, *By their fruits shall ye know them.*" And in determining which of these men shall have the premium, he does judge by their fruit.

When the Lord comes to give his decision in the great pomological fair of the future, I think he will judge in the same way, and say, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

My brethren, look at the lives of Christians; look at the magnanimities of the sects; look at the disinterestedness of men who are living for others instead of themselves; look at the men who lay down their lives for their fellow men; look at the men who shed the most tears for the poor and needy; look at the men who have the least self-indulgence and the least selfishness—look at these things if you would see an exhibition of true Christianity—if you would see real orthodoxy. The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy,

peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance—this is the orthodoxy which brings men nearest to God. You believe it as well as I do. And yet, to-morrow, when you get into your niche again, you will turn round and defend your sect, and attack your brethren.

There is a growing consciousness in Christendom, not that ordinances are of no value, but that they are subordinate; that they are relative; that they must be tested and ranked by their power to do something more than make externalities, or excogitations, or creeds. It is manhood that all men believe in. That comes from the power of the Holy Ghost.

No fruit ever ripens in the night, nor in the winter. It takes sunlight and warmth to make sugar in fruit. And in the soul of man nature never ripens spiritual graces: it is *God;* and that is what we must come more and more into the conception of. Manhood is the true church. Every true man is in the church wherever he is. God is the sun that ripens manhood in man. Every yearning, every aspiration, every feeling, and all growth, are of that God who is drawing us toward the great consummation for which we are destined.

Men are also united in the great experiences of sorrow—in the shadows through which they walk in their endeavors to perfect holiness in the fear of God. We must look upon life with an eye instructed by faith.

I have stood at the junction of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues about where Fifth Avenue comes in, and seen the cavalcades coming and going—a funeral on one street going to Greenwood, and on the other street a dozen carriages filled with people bent on pleasure, going to Prospect Park, jolting along, all mixed up; and funerals and pleasure parties returning the same way. It is pretty much so all through the city. People are mixed up. Light and darkness, joy and sorrow, are over against each other. There are tears in one part of the house, and there is joy in another part. We are all gathered together under one general economy. We are all open to bereavements. The storm breaks down the door of one man's house. Another man's house does not have its doors broken down by the storm, but the lightning may strike it. Some of you are overthrown by your relations to property. Some of you are brought to shame and sorrow and anguish through your relations to business. Some of you are excruciated by the conduct of your children. Some of you are borne down by one trouble, and some by another. No man goes unbaptized in the waters of affliction. Where the Jordan flows is just above the Dead

Sea, whose waters sometimes set up there, and are very brackish; and the waters we all are baptized in are bitter with the taste of sorrow and trouble.

When men do wrong, commit sin, in life, and know it, they feel guilty and remorseful; but the guilt and remorse will be according to the fineness of the nature that experiences them. One man does a great wrong, and apparently suffers but little or not at all. Another man does a less wrong, and suffers night and day in consequence of it. And for the comfort of those to whom it seems as though the worse a man is the less he suffers, and the better a man is the more he suffers, and as though it were a strange administration of suffering that we are under, I say this: that we are all suffering according to our constitution and nature; and the more severe the training, the sooner the perfected nature comes. We are rising under suffering. We are stumbling and getting up again. We are sighing and breaking out into joy. We are cast down but not destroyed. In our experience there is darkness and light; there is night and morning; there is midnight gloom and noontide brightness; there is disappointment and transport. There are all sorts of experiences strangely commingled in our lives. And we are all united in these experiences. For they are universal. But we are to look on beyond the time-line. We are to rise into the life above. We are all of us, thank God, all of us, tending toward higher conditions—toward a better life. That is the direction.

I am thankful to God that there is not a sect in Christendom, of which I have any knowledge, that I do not believe is tending toward the zenith of final holiness. It makes the feeling of brotherhood very strong in me. When I began my ministry, I began as a fighter. I have learned to lay down (except occasionally!) the weapons of my warfare in these matters, and I feel more compassion, more sorrow, more sympathy, and more sincere and cordial rejoicing in the progress of all the different sects which belong to Christendom. It might not do for me to say what I think of those who do not belong to Christendom, but in respect to all those who are within the great cincture of Christ I have this feeling: that according to their various methods they are all traveling one road toward a higher and better life in the world to come. I shall meet them there, and see them there, and I cannot afford to despise one of them. I should not know who it was that I was despising if I spoke a word against any one whose soul was calling out to Christ. Christ taught him to call him by name; and however rude his language I respect him. When the little child of the most vulgar peasant says to her, "Ma," no matter how shrill the voice or homely the face of the creature

that speaks, I dare not treat it with contempt. The voice even of a child uttering words of love or distress should command our reverence. And the voice of any soul crying out toward God, and longing for him, whether through doctrines, through ordinances or even through superstitions—this, everywhere, I have learned more and more to think of, to feel for, and to rejoice over. It is a matter of rejoicing to me that the union of the outside, which we see, is beginning to measure the real unity among those who are seeking the heavenly land.

All of us are united, likewise, in another way which I rejoice in. We are under angelic convoy. The angels may be afar off, but they are guiding us. I wish my children that have gone to heaven would speak to me sometimes; but they will not. I wish they would at least let me see the soft gleam of their wings as they disappear; but they will not. How many hours have I sat looking up, and up, and up into the starry depths, until I almost thought I saw the outline figures of real invisible spirits coming to me! But they came not. How many times when the summer made the air tremulous over field or hill, have I, in that strange, indescribable mood which summer brings to the soul, longed to see, in the morning, coming from the east as definite as the sun, something to limn to me the aspect and form of God! But it did not come. Though my soul cries out for God, my spirit finds him mostly in offices of kindness performed toward others. God comes to me mostly when I am endeavoring to rescue others from the pit. Sometimes when I rise from my book and arguments I feel as though doubt sat where God should sit. Then my heart is bitter within me, and I say, "O God, why dost thou hide thyself?" I never came from doing the work of God, humbling myself, giving my soul to ransom other souls from the path of suffering; I never came out of night bringing with me others that were benighted; I never did that which would liken me to the attributes of God, that the way was not full of God to me. By my faith and experience he has interpreted himself to me, till I know him as I know none of you.

We are all coming, under the convoying of angels, and of God himself, to that Name which is above every other name, and which is to be more to us than all other names. When all angels shall have sung, when all choirs shall have chanted, when all things, conspiring in harmonies, shall have made heaven full of music, if there shall come a pause, and there shall be called out the one name JESUS, the music of that song eternal will be sweeter than has been all the singing of the whole host of heaven. We are all under the loving care of this blessed Jesus.

It seems to you as though you were growing old, as though you were becoming aged; but you are not: you are going down toward youth. It seems to you as though with your declining years and waning strength you were coming nearer to a condition of limitation and circumscription; but as the shell is broken that the eagle may come forth and be free, so your outward tabernacle is being taken down that you may enjoy a larger freedom. It seems to you as though you were given over to weakness and infirmity; but what you call weakness and infirmity is but the taking away the pegs and cutting the cords that this earthly habitation may be removed, and that you may have perfect liberty. It seems to you as though you were alone; but ten thousand times ten thousand sainted beings God sends from heaven that they may be watchers and convoys for you.

Christian brethren—you that have just come into our midst—do not think that you have have ended the catalogue of your felicities because you have joined yourselves to those who are to teach you—because you are received into the fellowship and communion of this visible church. These are blessed things; but they are hardly the punctuations of that blessedness which God will minister to you when you enter the spiritual realm. You may call yourselves his sons. You may call yourselves heirs with Jesus Christ. You are on the road, not that your feet tread, but that your soul is treading. You are a citizen with the whole blessed company in the heavenly land. Let tears flow, let cares weigh, let sorrows pierce, let night come, let the soul dwell in darkness, if that be best; but remember that you are called "to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven."

Yours is a very noble inheritance. You have a relationship to every church under heaven. You have a relationship to all that goes on between the earthly church and the heavenly church. All of God's people belong to you. All the forces which, under God's direction, are operating in this world, are sweeping you on toward your celestial abode. As the mariner who comes up the Gulf Stream and is carried by the tide, and swept by the wind, rejoices that everything in the ship is being carried—even the smallest child among the crew as well as the captain himself—so it is a matter for rejoicing that the poorest and least of us are being swept on in the current of the Gulf Stream of divine love and mercy.

Heaven is yours. It is your home. Some of you that have come among us to-day have no earthly home. Some of you have no father and mother on earth. Some of you are children of sorrow, and have walked to your present experience through much tribulation.

But there is rest just above you. Just beyond the storm there is the calm. You are very near to the end of your journey. Therefore go forward, and rejoice as you go. Do not waver ; or, if you do waver, do not despair. If you stumble and fall, God will pick you up. If you sin, God will forgive you. If you sin till not one on earth forgives you, Christ will remember you. His love is more than a mother's love. The height and depth and length and breadth of it pass understanding. To that infinite love I commend you. Living or dying, ye are the Lord's.

We shall now proceed to administer the Lord's Supper ; and we invite to remain and partake of this ordinance with us, all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ ; all who are seeking to live a life of love and of faith in Christ ; all who aspire to rise above the dominion of their sin, and are in earnest to reach their true manhood in Christ Jesus. We invite all such, whether they are members of any visible church or not, because they are members of Christ's household of faith, and are inwardly Christ's. I do not own that table ; this church does not own it : it is spread in the name of the Lord ; and any soul that needs Christ, and knows it, and is willing to accept Christ's mediation and love, has a right to help himself from his own Master's table. Come, and come freely and rejoicingly.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.*

O Lord, thou art ascended up into the heavens; and yet, where is not thy Spirit? and where is not thy power? and where are not thy wisdom and thy goodness? Thou art working through fear. In the invisible realm thy power goes forth. We know not what is the fruitfulness of thy nature everywhere. But to us, afar off from this earth, thou art making manifestations of thyself. Not alone by the outward world, but through our own souls, thou art continually making thyself known, creating in us more exalted ideas of life and of manhood. And from our own limited sphere we derive higher conceptions of what thy nature must be. How it must transcend in all excellences anything that we have ever seen among men! What must be the scope, the riches, and the glory of our inheritance in thee!

We rejoice that thy word which has been sounding for so many ages is not yet without power. We thank thee that the tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ are still awaking gladness in many and many a heart. We thank thee that there are so many who are drawn toward him; that there are so many who seek to live by faith of the invisible; that there are so many who are endeavoring to consecrate all their powers to the service of the Lord God in loving fidelity.

We pray for thy blessing to rest upon all these thy servants who have joined themselves with us, and who are to be a part of this pilgrim band in days to come. O Lord, grant that this hour, so full of brightness, so full of cheer, and so full of comforting associations, may abide in their memory as a blessing all the days of their lives. And if, when they are scattered, they shall find in their way poverty and suffering and temptation; if they shall be left lonely and friendless; if they shall find themselves seemingly the sport of time and chance, may there still be in their souls this invisible bond of faith that shall unite them to us, and unite them with us to thee. May they never forget the Throne of love. May they never forget the Heart of love. May they never forget that Voice whose call they have heard—His voice whose name now rests upon them.

We pray that thou wilt guard them all from the dangers of prosperity, so that they may not by it be seduced to self-indulgence, to worldliness, to selfishness. Grant, we pray thee, that thy blessing may rest upon them, and that they may be sanctified therein. We pray that thou wilt keep them, at home and abroad, in the house of God or in their own dwellings, in mid-life and in old age.

Grant that not one of this blessed band may drop out; that not one link of the chain may be broken; that every one of them may inherit eternal life.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that those who are young, and who have had but little experience in life, may have thy guidance, by which they shall grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And we pray that all the households from which these have come may experience, through them, a blessing of the Lord. May that Spirit which we trust rests upon their hearts be diffused as a sweet fragrance wherever they go. May they seek to win men by their gentleness, and by their meekness, and by their humility. May selfishness and pride be put away from them. May they walk in all helpfulness, in all sweetness of love, in all obligingness of disposition. May men see that day by day they draw their strength from the

* Immediately following the reception of members into the church.

invisible. May they abound in prayer. May the power of God's Spirit rest upon them. May they be thy faithful witnesses everywhere. May they, upheld by thee, be able to overcome that which is greater and mightier than they are. May they know how to clothe themselves with the invisible armor of faith, and every one of them fight the battle of the Lord manfully. And having done all, may they stand invincible in soul.

We pray that thou wilt bless all those who have labored to bring these dear creatures to thee, that they may stand around about thy throne among the bands of the blessed. How many tears have been shed! How many prayers have been offered! How many persuasions have been spoken! What watching and what following there have been! What long care of love has ministered to some of them! They had been left to the world; they were without friends in Christ Jesus; and it is to the fidelity of those who were not mothers nor fathers to them, but who have proved better than father or mother, that they are rescued from the world. It is through their labor that they have come into the kingdom of the dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And we pray that thou wilt repay a hundred-fold those who have been benefactors to these thy scattered ones, for their acts and thoughts of mercy toward them.

And wilt thou, we beseech of thee, encourage all those who go out to labor in schools, and in the street, and among the poor and sick and imprisoned. Everywhere may they be faithful to the cause of their Redeemer, and bear his very spirit with them. May they see that what they sow in tears shall come forth in joy. We pray that thou wilt more and more give to every one of thy people enterprise in the service of the Lord.

Build up, we pray thee, thy churches everywhere. For all the manifestations of thy grace and kindness which thou hast shown them, we thank thee. We pray for those whose pastors are absent from them. May they all be kept safely until their pastors return. May the life and health of those who are going abroad or returning hither across the sea be preserved, and be precious in thy sight.

We pray that thou wilt be pleased to remember the Convention which is assembled in our midst to discuss those things which concern the interests of thy kingdom. Bless its members. Give them wisdom. In their deliberations may there be such sweetness of Christ's Spirit, and such true love fraternal, that all men shall see that they differ from those who are around about them. May their churches be kept in their absence. And we pray that all the interests of that great and honored and blessed Zion may come up before thee, and be abundantly blessed.

We pray for thy churches of every name. We pray for the universal church. We pray that we may be so joined to it in spirit that not death itself can separate us from the cloud of witnesses; from the great army of the blessed; from the general assembly and church of the first-born.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

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